

Strengthening the bonds of our community: Awarding local leaders for their contributions

Written by Mike Honda
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I recently worked with Southwest Airlines to encourage the company to organize an annual award that will be given to individuals that contribute to the community. This year, they decided to recognize the leaders of an Asian American Pacific Islander organization for their efforts. Southwest Airlines awarded Dr. Jorge Wong and Ms. A. Anne Im of Asian Americans for Community Involvement (AACI) in San Jose with the First Annual AAPI Community Excellence Award. AACI is a health and human services organization that provides a medical clinic, health education and promotion, a domestic violence shelter, and a center for survivors of torture. Dr. Jorge Wong is a California licensed clinical psychologist and AACI's Director of Mental Health Services, Quality Improvement and Compliance. He has worked with a diverse population in terms of languages and cultures ranging from monolingual Spanish speaking migrant farm working youths and their families in Watsonville, CA; at-risk Asian American youths in San Francisco and the former Asian Adolescent Day Treatment Program in San Jose, CA. Ms. A. Anne Im currently serves as AACI's Director of Community Programs and Advocacy. She is responsible for the design, implementation, and evaluation of five community programs which include AACI's senior center, domestic violence shelter, youth services, HIV/AIDS program, and health education and promotion. Her role also includes legislative advocacy and community building on local, state and national issues affecting the Asian American community. Following the great success of this initial acknowledgment, Southwest Airlines decided to make this community service award into an annual tradition. I look forward to seeing which of our region's many wonderful people are recognized next year.